

the discipline, and he didn't want his family worrying about paying for his education. He began his service after graduating from York Community High School in Elmhurst in 2002. He was assigned to the 121st Signal Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, based in Kitzingen, Germany. Like many of our soldiers, PFC Edwards had plans for the time when he would come back home. He was going to return to college. He loved computers and tinkering, and demonstrated his expertise in electronics during his brief Army service. At the time of his death, he was setting up cellular communication networks in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

PFC Edwards carried on a proud family tradition when he enlisted in the military. His father is a veteran of the Vietnam War, and his grandfather served in World War II.

PFC Edwards was only a young man of 20 when he made the ultimate sacrifice in service to his country. Our deepest sympathies go to his beloved family—his mother Elizabeth, his father Glen, and his sister Robin—as well as to his other family and friends. The entire community joins in mourning Shawn's loss.

We honor the memory of PFC Shawn C. Edwards and the dedication and bravery with which he served our nation and the people of Iraq.

OXYCONTIN IS ADDICTIVE

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a long-standing and unfortunately ever growing problem affecting our society, prescription drug abuse and addiction. Specifically, I would like to discuss the scourge that has been caused by the prescription drug OxyContin. OxyContin has caused countless deaths from overdose and toxicity. Equally important, however, OxyContin has caused thousands of individuals lawfully prescribed the drug to become addicted, causing a wide variety of destructiveness and in many instances ruining the lives of innocent people.

OxyContin is a schedule II narcotic pain medication as defined by the Controlled Substances Act. This is the most dangerous designation of legal, as opposed to illegal, prescription drugs under the Controlled Substances Act of 1970. It is in the same class as morphine. Unfortunately for the American public, the manufacturers and distributors of OxyContin have made concerted, intentional efforts to make this dangerous drug anything but "controlled".

Purdue Pharma is the manufacturer of OxyContin. This drug was promoted with the assistance of Abbott Laboratories. Over the last 6 years OxyContin has amassed sales of more than ten billion dollars as a result of an overly aggressive, inappropriate and, unfortunately for our citizens, highly effective marketing plan.

This drug was marketed to a broad range of physicians who, according to Purdue Pharma's own internal documents, were uneducated or at least undereducated on the use of opioids like oxycodone and morphine. Family practitioners in rural areas, gynecologists, sports medicine practitioners and

even dentists were instructed by Purdue and Abbott representatives that they could prescribe this morphine-like drug for even moderate pain without the slightest concern of addiction. They were told to prescribe the drug in very high doses so long as the pain persisted. The most widely prescribed dose of OxyContin contains 20 milligrams of oxycodone. Taking one pill of 20 mg OxyContin would be the equivalent of taking 4 Percocets, a very strong narcotic pain medication, as well. The marketing plan and the assertions about the safety of the drug were based on false information. OxyContin can be addictive to prescription patients.

In fact, countless numbers of innocent pain patients have become addicted to OxyContin. They were told both by the company and unwitting physicians that this drug was not addictive. That was not true. There is no support for the theory that the OxyContin is not addictive. Moreover, the manufacturers and promoters of this dangerous drug have conspicuously failed to study the addictiveness of this drug over the last 6, very prosperous years. It is only logical that the results of those studies would only undermine their very persuasive sales claims that this drug was not addictive.

Purdue will most certainly tout their concern for the pain patient, claiming that their drug provides pain relief to the masses of unfortunate sufferers of chronic pain. I am not persuaded nor will I be deceived by this argument. I am truly concerned for the pain patient. It is not my purpose to take good medications away from pain patients, but it is also not my intent to permit American companies to mislead the pain patients as to the safety and effectiveness of pain medication. Misinformation about the addictiveness of this drug did not help the pain patient. Instead, it took advantage of the very condition that this drug was supposed to help.

I call upon Congress to convene hearings on the question of how this public health menace came to be, who is responsible, what was told to the American public and to healthcare professionals by the manufacturer, and what we, the Congress, can do to prevent tragedies like this from repeating themselves in the future.

A RENEWED CALL FOR MINING LAW REFORM

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 2004

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, an article on the front page of the May 11, 2004, Washington Post entitled, "All Quiet On the House Side," by Charles Babington, contrasts "the burgeoning scandal over U.S. treatment of Iraqi prisoners and persistent concerns about the economy and the deficit" with the seemingly limitless lack of concern for meaningful action here in the House on any significant issue. This comes as no surprise to me or, evidently, Mr. Babington.

"The House's lean schedule is no accident. GOP leaders who set the agenda and floor schedule say they achieved most of their top priorities last year and are content to rest on their laurels through the election."

For this reason, a great number of important issues lay by the wayside, collecting dust,

while we convene in brief, three-day sessions to tackle the not-so-weighty issues of naming federal post offices, or designating days, weeks, or months to such non-controversial subjects such as "Financial Integrity."

A perfect example of an opportunity squandered by the Republican leadership is the total lack of attention being given to the need to reform this country's antiquated mining laws.

As many of my colleagues know, I have fought to reform the General Mining Law of 1872 for the past 17 years, and along with Representatives Shays and Inslee, continue to work on behalf of the taxpayer to ensure proper reimbursement for the natural riches mining companies extract from our public lands for the cost of a fast-food cheeseburger. Our bill, H.R. 2141, deserves consideration by the House Resources Committee, yet no hearings have been scheduled.

This is not going unnoticed by the public. On Monday, May 10, 2004, the Environmental Working Group released a new interactive report, located at www.ewg.org/mining, that shows how international and domestic mining companies have taken control of 9.3 million acres of public western lands under the archaic Mining Law of 1872. On the day following its release, three Western newspapers ran articles focused on local problems resulting from the mining industry's control of Western public lands:

"Group raises red flag over old mining law" by Michael Doyle, Modesto Bee.

"Once public land goes private" by Robert McClure, The Seattle Times.

"Bargain-priced mining claims abound in West, figures show. Report: 5.6 million acres staked out under 1872 law" by Mike Soraghan, The Denver Post.

H.R. 2141 does not deal with coal, or oil and gas. These energy minerals, if located on Federal lands, are leased by the government, and a royalty is charged. Further, Mining Law reform does not deal with private lands. The scope of the Mining Law of 1872 and legislation to reform it is limited to hardrock minerals such as gold, silver, lead and zinc on Federal lands in the Western States.

H.R. 2141 would prohibit the continued giveaway of public lands. It would require that a holding fee be paid for the use of the land, and that a royalty be paid on the production of valuable minerals extracted from these Federal lands. And, it would require industry to comply with some basic reclamation standards.

The American public deserves a fair return from the gold, silver and other hardrock minerals produced from public lands and the hard rock mining industry should be required to meet the same environmental standards that all other extractive industries meet. As our distinguished Minority Whip, Rep. Steny Hoyer, noted on the floor today, "Our constituents did not send us here to pretend to legislate. They sent us here to solve problems and fulfill our duty."

It is time, well past time, that Congress replace the 1872 Mining Law with one that reflects our values and goals. Please contact the Resources Committee Democratic staff if you would like to co-sponsor this important legislation.